

PROGRESS OF THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

OUTLOOK IN ALASKA

EXPERIMENTS WITH BORAX—FIGHTING THE BOLL WEEVIL.

Farms Worth More Than Gold Mines, Says Mr. Wilson—Some Unique Comparisons.

The Secretary of Agriculture has transmitted his eighth annual report to the President.

In opening his report the Secretary enumerates some of the more important features of the year's work. Among them are extensive co-operation with agricultural stations; the taking of preliminary steps to conduct feeding and breeding experiments; the war waged against the cotton boll weevil and against cattle mauls; plans for education of engineers in road building; production of a hardy orange, a hybrid of the Florida orange and the Japanese trifoliate; valuable research in successful shipping of fruit abroad; the value of nitrogen-fixing bacteria; successful introduction of plants suited to light rainfall areas; establishment of pure food standards; the extension of agricultural education in primary and secondary schools; the extension of instruction to our island possessions to enable them to supply the country with \$200,000,000 worth of domestic products, now imported from abroad.

Source of National Wealth.

The corn crop of 1904 yields a farm value greater than ever before. The farmers could not produce the single crop to pay the national debt, the interest thereon for one year, and still have enough left to pay a considerable portion of the government's yearly expenses. The cotton crop, valued for lint and seed at \$200,000,000, comes second, while the wheat crop, valued for the third place. Combined, these two crops will amount to equal in value the entire crop. Notwithstanding the wheat crop shows a low production, the year since 1900, the farm value is the highest since 1881. Potatoes and barley reached their highest production in 1904. In 1902 the crop was never so large by 90,000,000 bushels. The present crop of rice produced a yield of 300,000,000 pounds—200,000,000 more than ever before. Horses and mules reach the highest point this year, with an aggregate value exceeding \$1,500,000,000. On the other hand cattle, sheep and hogs show a slight decline.

The steady advance in poultry leads to some astonishing results. The farmers now produce 1.2-3 billions of dozen eggs and at the average price of the eggs during their busy season lay enough eggs to pay the national debt.

After a careful estimate of the value of the products of the year, the Secretary finds that the value of the products of the year is \$1,400,000,000, or about 10 per cent above the value of the products of the year 1903, and 31.28 per cent above that of the census year 1890.

Wealth of Farmers.

Some comparisons are necessary to the realization of such an unthinkable value, aggregating nearly 1.5 billions of dollars. The farmers of this country have in two years produced wealth exceeding the output of all the gold mines of the entire world since Columbus discovered America. The year's product is over six times the amount of the gold produced in the world, it lacks but three-fourths of a billion dollars of the value of the manufactured products of the world. The materials used; it is three times the amount of the value of the products of the world, and the value of all minerals produced in this country.

The year 1904 keeps well up to the average of exports of farm products during the last fifteen years. The balance of trade in favor of this country is \$1,400,000,000, or about 10 per cent above the value of the products of the year 1903, and 31.28 per cent above that of the census year 1890.

Experiments With Borax.

The Secretary devotes considerable space in this report to discussing the experiments with borax in food. As a result of extended experiments conducted in the bureau of chemistry, he concludes that the argus substances may be used without harm in food, nor can it be based on the results of the experiments which have been made. The logical conclusion deduced from the data obtained is that the use of acid and equivalent amount of borax should be restricted to those cases where the necessity thereof is clearly proved, and where it is shown that other methods of food preservation are not applicable, and that the use of such a preservative would be less harmful than the effects produced by the foods themselves by reason of decomposition.

The Boll Weevil.

The most important work of the bureau of entomology during the year has been its combat with the Mexican cotton boll weevil. Under the provisions of the special appropriation of \$250,000, made available last January, this work was greatly enlarged. Over a thousand acres, divided among thirteen experimental farms, have been devoted to experimental work, and it is believed that the cultural system these farms were designed to illustrate has so far proved to be the only practicable means of controlling the weevil. This is the outgrowth of several years of work.

Work in Alaska.

Extensive experiments have been carried on in Alaska. Distribution was made, moreover, of vegetable and flower seeds to some 1,500 persons, many of whom report success, and confirm the possibility of raising hardy vegetables in nearly all parts of the territory south of the arctic circle. In general, the experimental work in Alaska has shown that live stock can be successfully maintained at many points. Sheep raising has not proved successful. The Secretary says it is doubtful if usually good opportunities for dairymen can be found in the United States today.

Agricultural Colleges.

He enumerates instances of the liberality of many of the states in their dealing with the agricultural colleges in making provision especially for new buildings and increased equipment. He reports an increased interest in courses in rural engineering and the provision in several of the colleges of

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